

Journal of Religion & Society (JR&S)

Available Online:

<https://islamicreligious.com/index.php/Journal/index>

Print ISSN: 3006-1296 Online ISSN: 3006-130X

Platform & Workflow by: [Open Journal Systems](#)

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.22108583>

**Role of the Christian Community in the Pakistan Movement and Minority Rights in
Contemporary Pakistan: A Critical Analysis**

Maryum Riaz

M.Phil. Scholar, Department of Pakistan Studies, National University of Modern
Languages, Islamabad.

riazmaryam888@gmail.com

Mehboob Ali

M.Phil. Scholar, Department of Pakistan Studies, National University of Modern
Languages, Islamabad.

mehboobalii190110@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This article shows that the role of Christian community in Pakistan movement and analyzes the condition of minority rights in present-day Pakistan. It discusses the creation of Pakistan not only through of Muslims efforts but also support of Minority communities especially Christian. Many Christians leaders and institutions supported the Muslim league idea of separate homeland and worked with the leadership of Muhammad Ali Jinnah. The Christian famous leader Dewan Bahadur S.P Singh supported the idea of separate homeland and closely worked with Muhammad Ali Jinnah. This study is based on qualitative method including interviews with experts and analysis of secondary data such as research article and historical records. These contributions show that the Christian played an active role in the struggle for independence. This article also explains the rights given to minority in constitution of Pakistan including the freedom of religion, equal rights, justices etc. But it also highlights the still problems faced by the minority in practical life today such as discrimination, fewer job opportunities, and limited in political participation. Even though Pakistan was created on the principles of equality, justice, and religious freedom. But a still gap between constitutional promises and their practical implementation. The article concludes the improving the minority rights, promoting tolerance, equal opportunities are important to make Pakistan better and fair for everyone.

Keywords: *Christian Community, Pakistan Movement, Equality, Minority Rights, Constitutional Rights, Social Discrimination, Contemporary Pakistan.*

Introduction

Pakistan was created in 1947 after a long struggle against the British rule. This struggle not only involved Muslims, but it also included different communities like Christians, Hindus, and Parsis. Historical evidence shows that many Christian leaders played an active role in Pakistan movement. They contributed to the political, journalistic, ideological, and judicial fields. The three Christian leaders who supported the creation of Pakistan and voted for it include Dewan Bahadur S.P Singha, Fazal Elahi, and Cecil Gibbon, who participated in

political decision-making. The Christian journalist Pothan Joseph also supported the idea of Pakistan. Joshua Fazluddin provided ideological support, wrote articles and considered Pakistan a separate state. One of the important leaders was Sir Zafarullah Khan he was famous lawyer, diplomat, and politician. He was a member of All India Muslim League he helped in creation of Pakistan and he also helped in writing the Lahore Resolution. This resolution demanded a separate Muslim state.

After independence 1947 Christians helped in building the country people like A.R. Cornelius the first Christian chief justice, contributed to strengthening laws and rights. The Christian community played an important role in freedom movement of the subcontinent. They have contributed in various fields such as education, healthcare. The Christian missionaries' schools and colleges introduced western education. Due to this education people became more aware of equality, democracy, liberty, nationalism. This idea helped people understand their rights and take part in political activities. The Christian educational institutions play a key role important institution such as Gordon College Rawalpindi, Forman Christian College Lahore, Kinnaird College Lahore, and St. Stephens College Delhi these institutions trained leaders for the freedom movement. Many important leaders of the freedom movement like Allam Iqbal, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, and Chaudhry Rehmat Ali were educated in these institutions.

At a difficult time, many people were against the idea of Pakistan, the Christian community supported Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and All India Muslim League. They believed Muslims will create a fair and equal system compared to the Hindu caste system for these reasons they supported the idea of separate homeland. Many Christian leaders and organizations especially All India Christian Association strongly support the Jinnah and they believed he will protect the minorities rights in separate homeland their support in political matters especially in voting was very important in the creation of Pakistan. The Christian community played a very important role in the creation of Pakistan through their political support, intellectual contributions, and serviced in education and law, which helped in shaping the foundation of the new state. (Anjum&Tariq, 2012)

Research Question

1. What is the role of the Christian community in the development of Pakistan?
2. What challenges has the Christian community faced in Pakistan?
3. What are the barriers to political participation faced by the Christian community in Pakistan?

Research Objective

1. To study the role of Christian community in the development of Pakistan.

2. To analyze the challenges faced by Christian community in Pakistan.
3. To investigate the barriers to political participation faced by the Christian community in Pakistan.

Methodology

This study uses the qualitative method because it studies the role, challenges, and contributions of the Christian community in Pakistan. This study based on both primary data and secondary data. Primary data was collected through the interviews were conducted with historians and experts to gain knowledge related to the topic. The secondary data was collected from research articles, journals and online source to support and strengthen the research. This approach provides a clear and detailed understanding of the topic.

Literature Review

Many Scholars have studied the role of Christian community in freedom movement from different perspective. An article reviews the book “Masihe aur Tareekh-e-Pakistan” written by “Raja Nathaniel Gill and Mari Gill”. This article explains the very important role in Christian community in Pakistan movement and how they active supported Muhammad Ali Jinnah and All India Muslim League. This article also discusses how they rejected the Nehru Report and supported Jinnah’s fourteen points and it shows that the Christian leaders strongly supported important event like Lahore Resolution and partition of Punjab. Overall, this article shows that Christian community provided strongly support at difficult time and their contribution was very important to the Pakistan movement. (Hussain, 2015)

This article “How Jinnah’s Christians helped from independent Pakistan” explains that the Christian community big role in the freedom movement. They strongly supported the vision of Muhammad Ali Jinnah and separate homeland. This article discusses how Christian journalist, intellectuals to contributed through media and writing to promote the separate country. Because of they believed separate homeland to provide the equal rights and protect the minorities’ rights. Overall, this article shows that Christian community contributed the politically, educational, social services. (Alphonse, 2021)

This article “The role of Christians in freedom movement of Pakistan: An Appraisal” discuss the participation of Christian in the freedom movement. According to this article Christian strongly contributed political awareness through the western education and they supported All-India Muslim League. This study shows that the All-India Christian Association actively role played the idea of Pakistan because they thought creation of Pakistan safe the minorities’ rights. (Anjum&Tariq, 2012)

Research Gap

Previous studies such as Hussain, Alphonse, Anjum and Tariq have explained the role of the Christian community in the freedom movement and they contributed to different fields like education, politics, and social services. They focus on only one side. But there is a lack of research that explains both their contribution and the problems they face regarding rights and political participation. Mostly previous studies use the secondary data; because of this the real experiences and voices of people are not fully included. This research fills the gap by discussing the Christian community historical role, constitutional rights, and current challenges especially in education and equality, political participation. This study aims to provide a clearer and deeper understanding of the topic.

The Role of Christian Community in Development of the Pakistan

The Christian Community played a very important role in development of the Pakistan. Many Christian leaders to promote the idea of Pakistan. One of the famous leader Dewan Bahadur S.P Singha. He was from Punjab before partition. He was born in pasrur near Sialkot and later moved to Lahore. He was elected to the Punjab Assembly and as speaker of Assembly. He strongly supported the Pakistan Movement. At that time many Muslims religious leaders did not support the idea of Pakistan. Christian leaders strongly supported the visions of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. Jinnah trusted the Christians for example he chose the journalist pothan Joseph as editor of this newspaper. The 1942 All India Christian Association also supported the idea of Pakistan leader like Joshua Fazluddin to write that Pakistan should separate country.

In June 1947 big meeting held Punjab assembly and choose the both India and Pakistan. The result was very close 91 votes for Pakistan and 88 votes for India. The three Christians members voted in freedom movement such as S.P Singha, Cecil Gibbon, and Fazal Elahi the one vote extra S.P Singha because he was a speaker. Total Four Christian vote Punjab joined Pakistan. After independence S.P Singha became first speaker of West Pakistan but in 1949 he had replaced this position because he was not Muslim. (Kureshi, S.T. 2018, June, 1)

Challenges Faced by Christian Community in Pakistan

Democratic Country gives every citizen including minorities has equal rights. Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah said that all minorities including Christians should have equal rights in Pakistan. In his 11 August 1947 speech he clearly focused on equality and explained his vision for minorities that all citizens of Pakistan would be equal. He said that all citizens are free to go to their temples, mosques, and churches, the state should not concern itself with religious matters. This shows that Pakistan gives equal citizenship and equal rights. But after independence this vision changed with the objective Resolution in 1949. It declared that sovereignty belongs to Allah and state would follow the Islamic teaching. Although it provided ideological direction. This created a sense of exclusion among minorities including Christians they feel that their role in the state was being reduced. The constitutions 1956, 1962

and 1973 include for the protection of minority rights, religious freedom, justice and equality. Article 36 and 37 of the 1973 constitution clearly explain protection of minority rights and equal citizenship. But article 41 and 91 impose restrictions the prime minister and President Muslim only Muslim which creates a contradiction within the constitution. Although the constitution is written for equal rights it is not fully implemented in practice. (Dilawar Hussian, 2026, April, 27)

There are many challenges faced by the Christian community in Pakistan such as social challenges, economic challenges, political challenges but major challenges faced by Christian community Religious Discrimination, Blasphemy Law, forced Conversions and force marriage, lack of education and employment opportunities.

1. Social Challenges

The several social issues faced by Christian community in Pakistan. The Christian community lives in separate and specific area they socially isolated and limited participation in social activities, and leadership roles. There is a weak interaction and communication the Muslims majority which creates the distance between communities. They have less involvement in social welfare projects and community partnerships.

2. Economic Challenges

Christians belong to poor communities and they often work low-paying jobs like cleaning and sanitation. They face many economic challenges because most people are uneducated and providing fewer opportunities.

3. Political Challenges

Lack of political awareness and participation the Christians community they don't know legal or constitution rights because of political unaware they less representation politics and decision making. (Anwar, M. 2026, April, 28)

4. Religious Discrimination

Christian community treated the badly because of their religion. Sometimes Christians attacks based on they are Christian. Churches, homes, Christian areas damaged because of this Christian community feel fear and unsafe.

5. Blasphemy Law

Blasphemy laws that punished people badly speaking about Islam, the Quran and Prophet Muhammad. In Pakistan if any person says that Christian spoke badly about Islam. Christian can be arrested. Sometime this claim is not true. Mostly people do this because of anger, hate, and personal problem.

Example

Asia Bibi became death sentences after a fight against the other women about drinking water.

6. Forced Conversions and Marriages

Some Christian girls forced convert to Islam and married against their will and family often effort to get justice.

7. Lack of Education and jobs

Many Christians have limited access to education because of financial week they cannot afford the higher studies so that not provide a good job they faced the difficulties. (Swincer, G. 2017, October)

Barriers to Political Participation faced by Christian Community in Pakistan

In Pakistan Christian community faces many problems regarding political participation such as religious discrimination, Low representation in government, lack of education, poverty, fear and insecurity, majoritarianism, lack of awareness about political rights, marginalization.

Religious Discrimination

Christian community often face unequal treatment based on religion because of this they cannot freely participation in political activities and public affairs. This limits their rights and opportunities in society.

Low representation in government

Christian leaders limited representation in parliament and political parties. Because of this community problems are not properly discussed. As a result, their voice is week in policy-making and decision making.

Lack of education

Education is very important for understanding society and politics. Due to limited access to education. They may not know their basic rights. Many Christians are not political aware this also effects their leadership skills and decision making.

Fear and insecurity

Christians avoid to openly participating in politics because of fear of discrimination and violence. Because of this fear they avoid speaking openly and not join the political parties, attend meetings or stand in election. This limits their role in society and decision-making.

Poverty

They not actively participate in politics because of financial week. Many people of Christian community have low income they cannot afford the high cost of politics such as campaign

expenses, transportation or other political activities. Poverty also reduces their chances of active participation in politics

Majoritariansim

Majoritariansim means when the majority group has more power. Decision making power in politics and society of Muslims majority but minority limited representation and influence in decision making process. Because of this their voice is weak and their problems may not get proper attention.

Lack of awareness about political rights

Mostly Christian community people do not know their political rights, such as the rights to vote, rights to equality, and other constitution rights. Because of this they may not take interest in politics. This limits their power in society.

Marginalization

Christian community treated as a minority so they less power and influence in society and politics. Because of this their opinions are often ignored in decision-making. They socially and political marginalized. Because of this they not play an active role in the political system.

Constitutional restrictions

In Pakistan only Muslim can become a prime minister and president. This means minority like Christians cannot reach these top positions. Because of this limits their political participation for minorities. (Ahmad et al., 2023)

Major Findings

This study shows some new issues faced by Christian community especially in education and daily practices, especially related to equality and religious practices. One of the important findings is that Christian individuals do not provide the equal religious facilities as compared to Muslims citizens. For example, during Ramadan, all institutions, work places change their timing for Muslims. They also give some relaxation to Muslims students and workers. But Christians do not provide same facility during the fasting time. Muslims get two or three holidays on Eid but Christians are not same number of holidays on their festivals like Christmas or Easter. Because of this Christians feel that their less importance in religious events. This shows that all religions are not treated the equally. This study also shows problems in the education system. Christian students are often asked to study Islamiyat. They cannot give the option like ethics or their own religious subject. Mostly schools, colleges they cannot learn about them on religion. They also not separate teacher provide for minorities students. They not proper teacher teach the Christian religious subject. This makes learning difficult for them. Another important finding is about history books. The Christian leaders are played very important role in Pakistan Movement but not properly included in history

books and curriculum. So many students do not know about their contribution. Overall, these findings show that there is a lack of equality and Christians do not feel included in society. They also feel do not treated equally in religion, education, and history. These findings help to fill the gap by highlighting the current issues faced by Christian community.

Recommendations

This research gives some suggestions to improve the condition of the Christian community. The government and schools should treat all people equally. They should have same rights not based on religion. Christians should equally religious facilities like Muslims. During Ramadan Muslims get relaxation and easy timings. Similarly Christian should be given support during the fasting time. Schools and workplaces should understand and respect their religious practices. Christian festivals like Christmas and Easter should equally importance and provide the proper holidays like Eid holidays. This will make them feel important and included in society. In education Christian's students should not be forced to study Islamiyat. They should be allowed Ethics or their own religion. So, this will help them understand their beliefs. Schools, college hire the trained teacher for ethics subject. So that Christian students will make learning easier for them. The Christian leader's role should be including the history books and curriculum. Students should learn about their contribution in Christian leaders Pakistan movement. This will increase awareness and respect. The government should equally chance all people and improve job and education opportunities for Christian. The government also should proper awareness program in society. All people respect all religions. This will help creates the peace and harmony. Further researchers should also work on this topic. More studies are needed understand minority problems. Researcher should collect real-life data from different areas. This help finding better solutions. All these steps help in creating the equality and make society fairer and more inclusive for everyone.

Conclusion

This study shows that the Christians community played a very important role in creation of Pakistan. Christian leaders, intellectuals, and institution supported the idea of Pakistan and worked with leadership of Muhammad Ali Jinnah. Because they believed newly country provide the equal rights, religious freedom, and protection all minorities. This study also finds the gap between time of independence made the promises not full fill in present day. Although constitution of Pakistan provides the equal rights, religious freedom but these rights practical not implemented in practice. The Christian community still faces the different challenges in their daily lives. One of the main issues Christian is not equal religious facilities as compared to Muslims. So, the Christian community feels inequality. This study also finds a several issues in education system. Christian students not give option to study Ethics and their own religion subjects. There not hire the separate teachers for Christian students. The role of Christian leaders not highlights the history books and curriculum. Because of these students are not aware of their contributions. This reduces recognition and respect for the community.

Furthermore, challenges social, economic, and political also affect the Christian community. Lack of education opportunities, awareness and feeling insecurity limited participation in decision making. These challenges not include in national system. This research focuses not only the Christian leader contribution but also on their present-day challenges and promoting tolerance, respect, and equality.

References

- Ahmad, T., Anwar, T., Mustafa, G., Nawaz, S., and Aslam, M. (2023). Christian participation in politics: A case study of Punjab in Pakistan. *Journal of positive school psychology*, 7(2), 1416-1428.
- Alphonse, A. (2021, August 16). How Jinnah's Christians helped form independent Pakistan - UCA news.
- Anjum, M. ul., & Tariq, S. (2012). *The role of Christians in the freedom movement of Pakistan: An appraisal*. *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences*, 32(2), 437-442.
- Anwar, M. Lecturer, Department of Pakistan studies, National university of Modern Language, Islamabad, April 28, 2026.
- Hussain, F. (2015). Role of Christians in Pakistan movement. *The Nation*. <https://www.nation.com.pk/12-Jul-2015/role-of-christians-in-pakistan-movement>
- Hussian, D. Lecturer, Department of Pakistan Studies, National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad, April 27, 2026.
- Kureshi, S. T. (2018, June.1). *How four Christian votes made Pakistan possible*. *The Friday Times*. <https://thefridaytimes.com/01-Jun-2018/how-four-christian-votes-made-pakistan-possible>.
- Swincer, G. 2017, October Dangers and difficulties facing Christians in Pakistan. (n.d.-j). <https://bmrsg.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Persecution-of-Christians-in-Pakistan.pdf>